AMENDMENT TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend paragraphs 0001, 0022, 0023, 0033, 0036, and 0040 as follows:

[0001] The present invention relates to the addition to an article of footwear and more particularly a snowboard boot, of a system for stiffening and/or protecting the front surface of the article of footwear. This system is constituted by a front cover, which is removable or irremovable, rigid or semi-rigid, and by a device serving as ~~a fixing~~ an attachment point therefor, which is inserted into, beneath, or on both sides of the front half of the sole, enabling the system to be affixed temporarily or permanently to the article of footwear, independently of the vamp or upper, while enabling front-to-rear mobility of the cover with respect to this ~~fixing~~ attachment point.

[0022] Beneath the sole, the insert for attaching the cover can be constituted of a shaft, whose technical characteristics will be detailed subsequently, arranged transversely with respect to the longitudinal axis of the shoe, and its trajectory cuts into the wear surface of the sole. If the ~~fixing~~ attachment insert is housed within the latter, a recess is provided in the sole to ensure the passage and retention of the shaft.

[0023] The front end of the cover, composed of two lateral arms or legs each bored with a hole having the diameter of the shaft, is affixed to each end of the shaft by a nut, if the ends of the shaft are threaded, or by clipping, or by any other retaining method. If the surfaces selected for insertion are the lateral edges of the sole, two non-traversing inserts are positioned by partial boring of the sole, and the cover is fixed thereto as previously, or by a tenon/mortise system, or by snap fastener, or by any other ~~fixing~~ attachment method.

[0033] In any event, ~~it~~ the cover 1 has ~~the~~ a generally anatomical shape ~~of a pseudo-anatomical recessed tile~~ corresponding to the front portion of the boot which it must cover in closed position (Figure 5). That is, as is evident in the drawing figures, the cover has a generally concave contour, in transverse cross section, along its length. A cover 1 made ~~obtained~~ by molding or by thermoforming of a rigid or semi-rigid plastic currently offers a possible solution. Other materials, in particular composite materials, can lend themselves to other applications. As shown in Figure 4, in the open position, the cover has sufficient rigidity to retain its shape when pivoted forwardly away from the shoe.

[0036] In the embodiment shown where the cover is journalled, it has, at its front end, two arms 2 made of the same material and without interruption of the material, or legs, each bored with a hole 3, or bearing a tenon or mortise or snap fasteners or other types of fastening means. In the example, the arms are bored. They are directed toward the lateral edges of the sole so as to connect to the lateral ends of the insert(s) 5 carried by the sole. Therefore, as can be seen in Figures 2-5, the cover 1 is articulated to the sides of the sole, that is, between the top and bottom of the sole. At the front end of the cover, an arch 4 made of the same material and without interruption of material, joins these two arms 2.

[0040] The ~~affixation~~ attachment of the cover 1 on the shaft 5 ~~occurs~~ is accomplished in the following manner: in the example, the holes 3 bored at the end of each arm 2 are each housed around the flush and threaded ends 16 of the shaft 5 and are maintained therein by an anti-loosening washer 6 and a nut 7 which covers each end 16 of the shaft 5. Each arm 2 is affixed to the shoe by tightening the nuts 7 ~~according to a torque preventing loosening and avoiding the deformation of~~ sufficiently to prevent loosening and to avoid deforming the shoe. The pivoting of the cover 1 in a front-to-rear direction is then possible by mere manual action. The inner surface of the arms 2 rests against the lateral edges of the sole 17.